

Docket No. AUS920031003US1

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for monitoring a comparative load for servers within a group of servers on a network in which a first server forwards requests to a plurality of second servers, said method comprising the steps of:

preparing a first table containing, for each of said plurality of second servers, an address and a respective counter;

dumping a copy of an address resolution protocol cache to a storage area to form a cache dump;

determining, from said cache dump, which of said plurality of second servers are present in said cache dump and for each of said second servers present, incrementing a respective counter;

after said determining and incrementing steps are completed, comparing said plurality of respective counters with each other to determine if a load imbalance between said second servers is greater than a threshold value;

if said load imbalance is greater than said threshold value, sending a message regarding said load imbalance.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said dumping and determining steps are performed repetitively and said address resolution protocol cache is cleared after each repetition of said dumping step.

Docket No. AUS920031003US1

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein said preparing step is performed initially and then only when a server is added to or removed from said plurality of second servers.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of periodically writing values of said counters to a log file and clearing said counters.

5. A network, comprising:

- a first server connected to the Internet and having an address resolution protocol cache;

- a plurality of second servers connected to form a network with said first server, wherein said first server forwards a plurality of requests, received from the Internet, to respective ones of said plurality of second servers;

- a program, running on said first server, said program performing the steps of:

- preparing a first table that contains, for each of said plurality of second servers, an address and a respective counter;

- dumping said address resolution process cache to a cache dump;

- for each address in said cache dump, if said address in said cache dump matches an address in said first table, incrementing by one a respective counter;

- comparing said plurality of counters with each other to determine if a load imbalance between said second servers is greater than a threshold value;

Docket No. AUS920031003US1

if said load imbalance is greater than said threshold value, sending a message to an operator console regarding said load imbalance.

6. The network of Claim 5, wherein said program performs said steps repetitively and said address resolution protocol cache is cleared after each dumping step.

7. The network of Claim 5, wherein said preparing step is performed initially and then only when a server is added to or removed from said plurality of second servers.

8. A computer program product in a machine-readable format, said computer program product comprising:

first instructions for preparing a first table that contains, for each of a plurality of servers, an address and a respective first counter;

second instructions for dumping an address resolution process cache to form a cache dump;

third instructions for incrementing, for each address in said first table that matches an address in said cache dump, a respective counter in said first table;

fourth instruction for comparing said plurality of first counters with each other to determine if a load imbalance between said second servers is greater than a threshold value; and

fifth instructions for, if said load imbalance is greater than said threshold, sending a message to

Docket No. AUS920031003US1

an operator console regarding said load imbalance.

9. The computer program product of Claim 8, wherein said program performs said steps repetitively and said address resolution protocol cache is cleared after each dumping step.

10. The computer program product of Claim 8, wherein said first instructions are performed initially and then only when a server is added to or removed from said plurality of second servers.

11. The computer program product of Claim 8, wherein said program further comprises eleventh instructions for providing a report of a relative amount of time each server of said second servers was active over a given time period.